



**Legislative Council Staff**  
Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

# Memorandum

July 31, 2023

**TO:** Members of the Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee

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**SUBJECT:** Overview of the Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee

## Summary

This memorandum describes the Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee's membership, charge, meeting schedule, bill limits, and bill deadlines. It also summarizes the committee's activities over the last five years, including meetings, tours, and legislative recommendations. Final reports, memoranda, and other information from previous years are available on the General Assembly's website at: <http://leg.colorado.gov>.

## 2023 Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee

The committee members for 2023 are listed below.

### Senators

Senator Dylan Roberts, *Chair*  
Senator Jeff Bridges  
Senator Byron Pelton  
Senator Cleave Simpson  
Senator Nick Hinrichsen

### Representatives

Representative Karen McCormick, *Vice-Chair*  
Representative Marc Catlin  
Representative Matthew Martinez  
Representative Barbara McLachlan  
Representative Mike Lynch



**Committee membership requirements.** The Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee (WRARC) is a ten-member committee with terms extending from January 1 of an odd-numbered year to December 31 of the following even-numbered year (two years).<sup>1</sup> During odd-numbered years, the Senate President appoints the chair, and the House Speaker appoints the vice-chair. During even-numbered years, the House Speaker appoints the chair, and the Senate President appoints the vice-chair. Members are appointed according to the following criteria:

- five Senate members, three appointed by the Senate President and two appointed by the Senate Minority Leader;
- five House members appointed by the House Speaker in consultation with the House Minority Leader;
- at least four of the ten members must reside west of the Continental Divide or represent a district in which the majority of the population resides west of the Continental Divide; and
- members, to the extent possible, must be selected to achieve representation from each of the seven water divisions.

**Committee charge.** The committee is authorized to review water and agriculture issues and propose legislation related to the conservation, use, development, and financing of Colorado's water and agricultural resources. In conducting its review, the committee is required to consult with experts in the field of water conservation, quality, use, finance, and development. Pursuant to [Senate Bill 14-115](#), the WRARC is also required to review statewide planning for water resources. This law declares that the primary purpose of a state water plan is to determine state policy regarding the optimal conservation and development of Colorado's water resources, and it deems the General Assembly to be primarily responsible for guiding the development of state water policy. During the 2021 interim, the committee recommended a bill to change the name of the committee to the Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee in an effort to recognize the intersection of water and agricultural issues, as well as expand the committee charge to explicitly include agricultural issues. [Senate Bill 22-030](#) was passed during the 2022 legislative session to make this change official.

**Meetings and field trips** [Senate Bill 23-010](#) reclassified the committee, making it a year-round committee, rather an interim committee. The bill removed limitations on the number of meetings and the number of field trips the committee may hold and requires the committee to meet at least four times during each calendar year. Table 1 identifies the meetings and field trips

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<sup>1</sup>Section 37-98-102 (2), C.R.S.



that have been selected by the chair of the WRARC for 2023. Agendas for committee meetings will be posted on the committee's website: <http://leg.colorado.gov/committees/water-resources-and-agriculture-review-committee/2023-regular-session>

**Table 1**  
**2023 Interim Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee Meetings and Field Trips**

<b>Regular Committee Meetings</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>
Wednesday, August 23	Colorado Water Congress, Steamboat Springs	2:00 PM
Monday, September 11	Colorado State Capitol Room SCR 357	9:00 AM
Tuesday, September 12	Colorado State Capitol Room SCR 357	9:00 AM
<b>Committee Field Trips</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>
Tuesday, June 6 Wednesday, June 7	Yampa and White River Basins	8:00 AM
Thursday, July 27 Friday, July 28	San Luis Valley	11:00 AM
Tuesday, August 22 to Thursday, August 24	Colorado Water Congress Summer Conference Steamboat Springs	8:00 AM



## Committee Recommendations to Legislative Council and Deadlines

**Bill limits.** Each bill recommended by the committee must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the committee members, or at least seven members. The committee is limited to recommending three bills to the Legislative Council, unless two-thirds of the WRARC members vote to recommend a greater number.<sup>2</sup>

**Legislative Council review of committee recommendations.** In odd-numbered years, the Legislative Council must review interim committee recommendations by November 15. Bills approved by the Legislative Council do not count against a member's five-bill limit for the regular legislative session. Bills not approved by Legislative Council may be introduced in the regular session, but such bills will count against a member's five-bill limit. Interim committee bills must have prime sponsors prior to consideration by the Legislative Council.

**Requirements for bill drafts.** The Executive Committee of the Legislative Council's guidelines for interim committees require that at least a majority of the committee membership approve a bill in concept prior to requesting a bill draft. Requests for draft bills must occur during a single committee meeting set for requesting legislation. Bill requests must be made at least 42 days before the final meeting to allow sufficient time for drafting, the preparation of a fiscal note, and final consideration by the committee. Committee members must make drafting information available at the meeting at which the members request bills or must submit such information to the bill drafter **within three calendar days after the meeting**. Failure to submit the drafting information prior to the deadline will be deemed as a withdrawal of the bill request. The timeline for bill drafts for this interim is as follows:

- the committee will request all bill drafts at the meeting on September 12;
- committee members must provide all drafting information to the bill drafters by September 15;
- bill draft requests must be finalized for distribution to committee members and affected agencies for fiscal note preparation by October 3; and
- the committee will consider finalized bill drafts, fiscal notes, and any amendments and vote to recommend bill drafts to Legislative Council at the meeting on October 31.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 37-98-103, C.R.S.



## Prior Activities of the Water Resources Review Committee

In previous years, the committee has conducted 29 tours, covering all of Colorado's major river basins. Table 2 provides additional information about the committee's activities over the past five years. Note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee did not meet in 2020.

**Table 2**  
**Recent Activities of the Water Resources Review Committee**

Year	Number of Meetings	Tours/Field Trips	Recommendation(s)
2022	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tour of Denver Water Headquarters</li> <li>• Attended Colorado Water Congress summer conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senate Bill 23-010, Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee – <i>signed into law.</i></li> <li>• House Bill 23-1010, Task Force On High-altitude Water Storage – <i>postponed indefinitely</i></li> </ul>
2021	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attended Colorado Water Congress summer conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senate Bill 22-028, Groundwater Compact Compliance and Sustainability Fund – <i>signed into law</i></li> <li>• Senate Bill 22-029, Anti-Speculation – Use of Existing Law to Control Markets – <i>postponed indefinitely</i></li> <li>• Senate Bill 22-030, Expand Scope of Water Resources Review Committee to Include Agriculture – <i>signed into law</i></li> </ul>
2019	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-day tour in the South Platte Basin with Water Education Colorado</li> <li>• Attended Colorado Water Congress summer conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senate Bill 20-024, Require Public Input On Water Demand Management Program- <i>postponed indefinitely</i></li> <li>• House Bill 20-1072, Study Emerging Technologies For Water Management- <i>postponed indefinitely</i></li> <li>• House Bill 20-1069, Add Water Well Inspectors Identify High-risk Wells- <i>lost</i></li> <li>• Senate Bill 20-048, Study Strengthening Water Anti-speculation Law- <i>signed into law</i></li> </ul>
2018	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-day tour in the Rio Grande Basin with Water Education Colorado</li> <li>• Attended Colorado Water Congress summer conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House Bill 19-1029, Republican River Water Conservation District – <i>signed into law</i></li> <li>• Senate Bill 19-016, Severance Tax Operational Fund Distribution Methodology – <i>signed into law</i></li> <li>• Senate Joint Memorial 19-001, Memorial for Arkansas Valley Conduit – <i>adopted</i></li> <li>• Senate Joint Memorial 19-002, Corps of Engineers to Dredge Lower Arkansas River– <i>adopted</i></li> </ul>



2017

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- Two-day tour in the San Miguel and Dolores Basins with the Colorado Foundation for Water Education
- Attended Colorado Water Congress summer conference
- House Bill 18-1008, Mussel-free Colorado Act – *signed into law*
- House Bill 18-1053, Reclaimed Water Use for Marijuana Cultivation – *postponed indefinitely*
- House Bill 18-1069, Reclaimed Water Use for Toilet Flushing – *signed into law*
- House Bill 18-1093, Reclaimed Water Use for Edible Crops – *became law without Governor's signature*
- Senate Bill 18-019, Expanded Duration for CWRPDA Revolving Loans – *signed into law*
- Senate Bill 18-038, Reclaimed Water Use on Industrial Hemp – *signed into law*
- Senate Bill 18-041, Authorize Water Use Incidental Sand and Gravel – *signed into law*

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Source: Legislative Council Staff.

***“Each bill recommended by the committee must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the committee members, or at least seven members.”***